

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W
-----121646Z 019139 /46

R 121557Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8671
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01009

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AL, FR
SUBJ: QUAI PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ALBANIA

REFS: A. STATE 1969 (NOTAL). B. PARIS 31309.

1. IN COURSE OF MOST RECENT CONVERSATION WITH QUAI'S
ALBANIAN DESK OFFICER, MADAME BATBEDAT FOCUSED ON
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THEMES RELATING TO ANALYSIS REFTEL A, WHICH WE USED AS
DIRECTED.

2. ALBANIA'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH EE COUNTRIES:
FRANCE'S AMBASSADOR IN TIRANA HAS RECENTLY
REPORTED THAT, AFTER INTERIM PERIOD IN 1976 WHEN ALBANIA
ONLY SIGNED PROVISIONAL ONE-YEAR ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

WITH ITS EE PARTNERS, IT HAS AGAIN BEEN NEGOTIATING NEW FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH ALL OF THEM, AND NOT, AS PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT (PARA 8 REFTEL A) ONLY WITH ROMANIA. FRENCH BELIEVE SUCH AGREEMENTS ARE NOW IN FORCE WITH ALL EXCEPT CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE GDR, WITH WHICH THEY MAY STILL BE IN NEGOTIATING STAGE. NONE OF THESE AGREEMENTS HOWEVER HAVE BEEN PUBLICIZED. QUAI ASSUMES THEY SUBSUME ONE-YEAR PROVISIONAL AGREEMENTS OF 1976 IN 1975-1980 TIME FRAME.

3. ALBANIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS AND THE ALBANIAN INTERNAL SCENE:

BATBEDAT CONSIDERS THAT THE UNCERTAINTIES IN RECENT ALBANIAN ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR ARE AMONG INDICATIONS OF THE CONTINUING "PANIC" WHICH HAS BEEN ASSAILING ALBANIA'S LEADERSHIP IN LAST THREE YEARS AS ITS TRADITIONAL BIG BROTHER IN PEKING HAS BEEN CHANGING ITS TUNE. QUAI HAS NO DOUBT CHINA HAS LOWERED THE LEVEL OF ITS AID AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA, PARTLY BECAUSE OF SHIFTING CHINESE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRIORITIES, PARTLY BECAUSE THE CHINESE THEMSELVES HAVE HAD SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING RECENT EARTHQUAKES. ALBANIANS HAVE, OF COURSE, ALSO BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED DEVELOPING DIVERGENCIES BETWEEN THEIR OWN AND CHINA'S IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS, AS "PRAGMATISTS" IN CHINA HAVE BEEN WINNING OUT OVER "RADICALS" WHO HAD BEEN TIRANA'S SPECIAL FRIENDS AND ADVOCATES. THIS FACTOR HAS PROBABLY BEEN PROFOUNDLY ACCENTUATED BY REAL OR IMAGINED FEAR THAT THE CHINESE, CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIETS, AND OTHERS MAY BE TRYING TO "LEAD" THIS OR THAT ALBANIAN FACTION IN THEIR DIRECTION. INDEED, IN BATBEDAT'S VIEW THESE ANXIETIES MAY NOT BE UNFOUNDED, SINCE IT IS POSSIBLE EVEN PROBABLE THAT CHINESE MAY INDEED HAVE TRIED TO "WORK WITH" FORMER ALBANIAN DEFMIN BALLUKU, WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY PURGED. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE CENTRAL POINT IS THAT HOXHA HAS BEEN UNABLE TO RESOLVE THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD SITUATION IS POSING FOR ALBANIA SINCE HIS POLICY INEXTRICABLY TIED TO RIGID ORTHODOXY WHICH CAN ONLY BE MODIFIED EXTREMELY SLOWLY. AS A RESULT, THE FETID ATMOSPHERE OF PRESSURE, FEAR, AND FAR-REACHING PURGES (BATBEDAT CITED STATISTICS TO SHOW HOW DEEPLY PURGES HAVE CUT INTO THE ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP) CONTINUES. FACED WITH THESE PRESSURES, HOXHA HAS BEEN SEEKING RELIEF BY BUILDING HIS NAIVE DEFENSE SYSTEM OF BUNKERS (APPARENTLY BEING CONTINUED)--WHICH, AT LEAST, REPRESENTS ACTIVITY. HE HAS PERMITTED AN EVER-SO SLIGHT ECONOMIC OPENING TOWARD THE WEST AND IHE IS MAKING A

RENEWED EFFORT TO OVERCOME HIS OWN FEARS OF YUGOSLAVIA
(AS IT IS, AND AS IT COULD BE). NONE OF THESE, HOWEVER,
ARE LIKELY TO SUFFICE IN QUAI OPINION TO RELIEVE THE
DEEP-SEATED TENSIONS EVIDENTLY EATING AT THE LEADERSHIP,
A LEADERSHIP WHICH IS BASICALLY VERY MUCH AFRAID OF

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 01009

BEING LEFT ALONE IN A VERY HOSTILE WORLD.

4. ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ITALY, FRANCE, AND OTHERS
IN THE WEST:

QUAI AGREES WITH DEPARTMENT'S VIEW THAT, IN ITS
SLIGHT OPENING TOWARD WEST, ALBANIANS HAVE OPENED DOOR
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WIDEST VIS-A-VIS ITALY, AND FULLY SHARES DEPARTMENT'S
ASSESSMENT OF PECKING ORDER ACCORDED VARIOUS COUNTRIES
THIS RESPECT. FRANCE'S OWN TRADE RELATIONS WITH
ALBANIA REMAIN MINISCULE, SLOW, FRUSTRATING AND BESET
BY UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS. BATBEDAT REPORTS, TO CITE
SPECIFIC INSTANCE, THAT FRENCH IMPORT OF ALBANIAN
TOBACCO IS MOMENTARILY AT STANDSTILL DUE TO FACT THAT,
TO FRENCH AMAZEMENT, ALBANIANS ABSOLUTELY REFUSED TO
LOAD A SHIPMENT OF TOBACCO ONTO A SPANISH-REGISTERED
VESSEL, WHICH HAPPENED TO BE IN AREA, AND WHICH FRENCH
HAD COMMISSIONED FOR THIS JOB. AS RESULT, SPANISH SHIP
LEFT EMPTY. BATBEDAT COMMENTED THAT FRENCH HAD SIMPLY
NOT THOUGHT OF POSSIBILITY THAT NATIONALITY OF MERCHANT
SHIP WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT TO ALBANIANS THAN TRADE
INVOLVED.

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM ALBANIANS FACE IN ITS
TRADE RELATIONS IS OF COURSE LACK OF FINANCIAL FLUIDITY,
PARTICULARLY IN BORDER CURRENCIES. BATBEDAT ASSERTS
ALBANIANS HAVE NOT ASKED GO FOR ANY CREDITS OR HINTED
THAT THEY MIGHT BE INTERESTED. QUAI ASSUMES THAT HARD
CURRENCY NECESSARY FOR CURRENT TRANSACTIONS ARE THERE-
FORE PROVIDED BY CHINESE BANK ACCOUNTS IN PARIS AND
ELSEWHERE IN WESTERN EUROPE WHERE CHINESE HAVE
EMBASSIES.

5. "BEACON OF STALINISM IN EUROPE":

FOCUSING ON POINT IN PARA 7 REFTEL A, WHICH WE
REFERRED TO, BATBEDAT WONDERED IF THIS WAS NOT SLIGHT
MISREADING OF WHAT HOXHA HAD ACTUALLY SAID, AND SUG-
GESTED THAT HE IS TRYING TO BE "BEACON" OF INTERNA-
TIONAL, NOT JUST OF EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP OF ORTHODOXY.
SPECIFICALLY, HOXHA SEEMS TO BE SUGGESTING A "REGROUP-
ING" OF "MARXIST-LENINIST" SPLINTER PARTIES, HAVING
BECOME DISABUSED BY SOME OF THOSE NOW CLAIMING THE
MANTLE. BATBEDAT MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE, THIS
CONNECTION, ALBANIAN DISGUST AT THE WARMTH WITH WHICH
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PCF DELEGATION, FOR INSTANCE, WAS RECENTLY RECEIVED IN
PEKING.

6. REQUEST DEPARTMENT ACTION:

AT END OF CONVERSATION BATBEDAT ASKED IF WASHINGTON COULD HELP QUAI WITH SOME OR ALL OF FOLLOWING:

(A) ANY SPECIFIC DATA ON CURRENT VOLUME OF ALBANIAN TRADE WITH THIRD COUNTRIES, INCLUDING EASTERN EUROPE. DO US EE EMBASSIES HAVE ANY INFO?;

(B) ANY INFORMATION WE MAY HAVE ON ALBANIAN METHODS OF FINANCING AND PAYING FOR THEIR WESTERN IMPORTS (CHINESE BANK ACCOUNTS?);

(C) SPECIFICS WE COULD OFFER ON WHAT EXACTLY CHINESE MAY BE DOING FOR ALBANIAN DEFENSE;

(D) INFO WE MAY HAVE ON EXTENT AND POSSIBLE PURPOSE OF THE ALBANIAN BUNKER PROGRAM.

EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER DEPARTMENT COULD PROVIDE THESE POINTS.
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